assistance equal to 20% of the cost of Global Positioning System (GPS) and communication equipment. The upper ceiling of the financial assistance is Rs. 30,000/- per vessel. The fishermen are also facilitated to maintain communication with shore.

Indian fishermen detained in foreign jails

2565. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN:
SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Indian fishermen languishing in the jails of foreign countries;

(b) the steps taken by the Government for their release; and

(c) whether Government are informed by the appropriate foreign Governments when Indian fishermen are apprehended and put in jail?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) There are 371 Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails,none in Sri Lanka and about 6 fishermen in Bangladesh.

(b) The matters regarding release of Indian fishermen and their boats held in foreign countries are consistently taken up with Governents through diplomatic channels, both in New Delhi and the countries concerned, and during high level contacts from time to time.

(c) No, Sir. It takes some time to confirm the actual arrest of the fishermen by the Governments concerned. However, the Government of India on the basis of information available from the State Governments concerned, relatives of fishermen, fishermen associations and media reports etc. pursue the matter with the Governments concerned to confirm the arrest of Indian fishermen.

Indo-Iran Cooperation

2566. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a joint declaration between India and the Islamic Republic

of Iran issued on 25th January, 2003, in New Delhi, envisaged various bilateral measures for furthering of mutual socio-economic interests;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of steps taken by both sides towards implementation of the same, so far;

(d) whether any assessment of the status of the joint declaration made following the change of regime in Iran recently; and

(e) if so, the conclusions thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) Yes. The New Delhi Declaration signed between India and Iran on 25th January, 2003 puts forth the vision of strategic partnership between the two countries touching all aspects of bilateral relations-mutual economic cooperation, cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons, science and technology, information technology, education and training, reconstruction of Afghanistan, international terrorism, and other global issues. In pursuance of this vision, the two countries have entered into agreements for cooperation, *inter-alia,* in science and technology, hydrocarbons sector, cultural exchanges, transit of goods, vocational training & urban water management and operationalization of a line of credit. In addition, there is a Joint Economic Commission at the level of Ministers, which meets regularly to promote bilateral economic cooperation. Interaction between India and Iran in the security and strategic spheres has also been institutionalised for enhanced regional and global cooperation.

(d) to (e) President Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad has taken over office in Iran on August 3, 2004. His cabinet is yet to be finalised. Government of India will work closely with the new Government in Iran to further implement the Joint Declaration for forging a strategic partnership between India and Iran.

Indo-EU Partnership

2567. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether EU have finalized plan for partnership with India;